

**MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS**

**JULY 26, 2016**

**Proclaiming World Breastfeeding Week 2016**

Breastfeeding reduces the risks of both acute and chronic health conditions for both mothers and their babies. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends at least six months of exclusive breastfeeding, and continued breastfeeding for as long as is mutually desired. Given the importance of infant nutrition, the American Academy of Pediatrics has proclaimed breastfeeding a *public health issue* and not only a lifestyle choice.

As a result of California's strong breastfeeding laws, research shows that the odds of a baby ever being breastfed is 225% greater in California than in other states which lack similar public policy. In addition, the odds of a baby being breastfed at six months is 102% greater in states like California, where the Labor Code has an enforcement provision. California laws help remove systemic barriers that prevent women from reaching their own breastfeeding health care goals.

California families benefit from the Paid Family Leave Law, which allows new families to take partial paid leave to bond with their new children through the Employment Development Department's Paid Family Leave program. This program was found to double the median duration of breastfeeding, even among low wage employed mothers. Unfortunately, the County of Los Angeles (County) has the lowest

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RIDLEY-THOMAS\_\_\_\_\_

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KNABE \_\_\_\_\_

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awareness of this law throughout the State and work still needs to be done to educate families.

California hospitals lead the nation with 76 hospitals adopting *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding* through the Baby-Friendly™ Hospital Designation process. California legislation also calls for all birthing facilities to achieve this designation or a similar one by 2025, which will help ensure that all mothers who want to breastfeed are given the support and counseling needed to meet their health care goals. Locally, 48% (28) of hospitals in the County have achieved Baby-Friendly™ Hospital Designation.

California is also leading the nation in supporting employed mothers to breastfeed with worksite lactation accommodations and protections. The Affordable Care Act requires health insurance payers to provide quality and effective breastfeeding support, supplies and counseling when mothers need assistance with breastfeeding challenges or return to work or school.

The County is the largest employer in the County, and leads by example with a strong worksite lactation accommodation policy and programs that go beyond the requirements of the State law. Additionally the Women Infants and Children (WIC) programs, which serve 67% of all infants born in the County, provide high quality breastfeeding support for mothers and infants. In community clinics and medical offices, women enrolled in the comprehensive perinatal services programs also receive breastfeeding support.

In celebration of World Breastfeeding Week, the County should continue to address barriers to breastfeeding by informing all new mothers of their rights under California's breastfeeding laws and support their intent to breastfeed.

**THEREFORE I MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:** Proclaim the week of August 1<sup>st</sup> – 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 as World Breastfeeding Week in Los Angeles County and acknowledge World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action's 2016 World Breastfeeding Week theme "Breastfeeding: A Key to Sustainable Development" with the goal of

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empowering all women, working in both the formal and informal sectors, to adequately combine work with child-rearing, and particularly breastfeeding; and continue to:

- 1) Encourage all hospitals in Los Angeles County (County) to adopt policies that encourage and support exclusive breastfeeding at birth and throughout early childhood;
- 2) Urge all County employees to promote the important role breastfeeding plays in protecting the health of mothers and their children;
- 3) Encourage all employers in the County to adopt workplace lactation accommodation policies in accordance with California Labor Code 1030-33; and
- 4) Urge all citizens to support breastfeeding and make an informed choice about the care and feeding of their infants.

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